

the country strong. I want to thank you so very much for your hospitality; I want to thank you for your prayer. May God bless America. Thank you all. Thank you all very much, and God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. in the BMP Hangar at the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Talent, candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri; and Lori Hauser Holden, wife of Gov. Bob Holden of Missouri.

Remarks in Aurora, Missouri

January 14, 2002

Thank you all very much. So there I was, sitting in the residency at the White House—[*laughter*—watching a football game, eating a pretzel. [*Laughter*] And the next thing I know is Barney, the Scottish terrier, is wondering what the heck happened. [*Laughter*]

I want you all to know that I learned a good lesson, and that is: I should have listened to my mother. [*Laughter*] She said, “Never try to swallow your pretzel until you chewed it.” [*Laughter*]

Thank you all for coming, and thank you for letting me come. If you see some of the folks who lined the road coming in, tell them thanks. Really, I wish we had a bigger hall so I could thank everybody in person, but there’s a lot of people from your communities that are out there to wave, and I’m really grateful. Thank the high school kids and the teachers for being out there, as well.

I’m working my way through the Midwest, through the heartland, because I want to send a couple of messages to the American people. One message is, food is really important for the economy of this country, that in the year 2000, \$1.3 trillion of the GDP came from food and fiber, 24 million Americans were employed as a result of work and food and fiber, that if we’re talking about the economic health of the country, we’ve got to always understand it begins with a healthy farm economy. And if we’re worried about creating jobs—which I am—then we’ve got to think—we use some common sense principles in order to expand the job base so people can find work.

I’m also glad to be in the heartland because it’s a place that understands values, the values of family and faith, of personal responsibility and hard work.

I started my day in Moline, Illinois, at the John Deere plant, where they’re making Harvesters, and then here, of course, in Aurora and Springfield, Missouri. And then I’m on my way to New Orleans, where they sell the product. It’s a good message for America, to understand how the farmer works in relationship to the equipment manufacturer, in relationship to the exporter.

I’m so happy that people in my administration understand the importance of the farmer to our country, starting with our Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, and the Secretary of Commerce, Don Evans. Thank you both for being here.

I want to thank Senator Kit Bond for traveling with me today. He was giving me a good lesson on Missouri politics, as was Jim Talent, when we drove over. Thank you for coming, Jim. And I’m traveling with two members from the Missouri congressional delegation, Kenny Hulshof and Todd Akin. Thank you all for coming.

Now, my friend Roy Blunt isn’t here. He’s evidently on a mission somewhere else, but he sent his better half. And I want to thank very much—I want to thank sweet Roseann Blunt for coming, as well. Thank you for coming. I want to thank the Missouri Farmers Association. I want to thank the people who run this outfit. And I want to thank my fellow citizens for coming today.

One of the things I strongly believe is that the role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risk, an environment in which people are willing to risk capital, an environment that heralds the entrepreneur and the small-business person. That’s the role of Government.

If the role of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risk, one of the things Government must do is to work hard to create confidence in the people. And at this moment in history, the best thing I can do, along with my administration, in order to build the confidence of

the American people, is to prevent the evil ones from hitting us again.

The best way to make sure this economy recovers and people can find work is to have a homeland security system that runs down every hint that somebody might harm us, runs down every lead that we find. I want to assure you all that I spend a lot of time, as did my administration, on this top priority, that we're working with intelligence-gathering services from around the world to sniff out, to listen to, to find out who might be trying to harm us again, that we've got our law enforcement officers around our country—at the Federal, State, and local level—now understand that they must remain on alert, that there's still an enemy, and we've got to stop them. The FBI's primary mission is homeland security, and we're working closely with folks in your communities to make sure that if there's any hint that somebody may try to harm America, that we're going to act and act now and bring them to justice.

I'm proud of the efforts of many all around our country who are working endless hours to make America safe. But the best way to make America safe is to hunt the enemy down where he tries to hide and bring them to justice, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

I gave our military a mighty task, and they have responded. I want to thank those of you who have got relatives in the military, a brother or a sister, or a son or a daughter, or a mom or a dad. They have made me proud, and I hope they made you proud, as well.

We sent the military on a clear mission, and that is to bring the evil ones to justice. It's a mission, however, that I expanded to include this: that if you hide a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you provide aid and comfort for a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist. That's why the Taliban is no longer ruling Afghanistan.

I think that one of the most joyous things for me is to see the faces of the Afghan women as they have been liberated from the oppression of the Taliban rule. Not only is our military destroying those who would harbor evil, destroying whatever military they had, destroying their defenses, but we're lib-

erators. We're freeing women and children from incredible oppression.

The humanitarian aid workers are home, as part of the conditions I laid down for the Taliban. The Taliban is in total rout. But we haven't completed our mission yet. And we're now at a very dangerous phase of the war in the first theater, and that is sending our boys and troops into the caves. You see, we're fighting an enemy that's willing to send others to death, suicide missions in the name of religion, and they, themselves, want to hide in caves.

But you know something? We're not going to tire. We're not going to be impatient. We're going to do whatever it takes to find them and bring them to justice. They think they can hide, but they're not going to hide from the mighty reach of the United States and the coalition we have put together.

I see members of the FFA here. I want you to know that the cause that our military now wages is a just cause, it's an important cause, that I long for peace. But I also understand that this Nation must lead the war against terror if you and your children and your grandchildren are going to grow up and understand the freedoms that we so enjoy in America, that if you and your children and grandchildren can grow up in a peaceful and hopeful world, now is the time for this country to lead, and lead we will.

I'm worried that the attacks on 9/11 have affected the ability for people to find work, and we're going to do something about it. Not only are we going to make the homeland secure, but we've done some things in Washington that actually make sense. *[Laughter]* And one of them is to pass a good education bill that makes public education a priority, that sets high standards, that calls people into account if there's failure, and that trusts the local people to run their own schools.

I had the privilege of traveling the country last week with two Republicans and two Democrats, the sponsors of the bills. One of the Democrats happened to be Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts. Never did I dream—*[laughter]*—that I would say good things about him. *[Laughter]* Never did he dream that I would say good things about him. *[Laughter]* But I can, because he joined

together with an administration to come out with a bill that's a good bill.

It goes to show—this bill shows what can happen in Washington when we're willing to put our political parties behind and focus on what's best for the United States of America.

I'm going down to New Orleans tomorrow. I like to go there. It's a nice place to eat, and I'm going to be—[*laughter*]. I've got a lot of friends in Louisiana; it's right next to the State where I used to be Governor. But I'm also going to remind people of the importance of trade, trade not only for the agricultural sector of our country but trade in general. And let me tell you my view.

If you're good at something, you ought to try to encourage it to become a bigger part of your world. And if you're good at growing crop, we ought not to diminish the ability to grow crops in America; we ought to encourage. And the way to do that is to find other places to sell crops. If you're the best in the world at what you do—which we are in farming—then it seems like, to me, we ought to encourage that product to be sold not only here in America but level the playing field so it can be sold all across the world.

I know there's a lot of farmers around who say, "You know, we've heard that before. Every trade agreement trades out the farmer. Here comes old Bush from Texas, and he says he's for the farmer. Yet, you watch. They'll worry more about other products, and when it comes time to argue for the agricultural sector, they'll just leave us out."

But that's not the way it's going to be, folks, because I understand how important agriculture is, not only for America, but how important it is for international trade for our country. Not only domestically but internationally, agriculture is important.

And I'd just ask you to look at the record. In China, I argued that China ought to be in the WTO because it's good for the American agriculture. Look at the agreement. We've opened up the Chinese markets to U.S. farmers. It's good for China, and more importantly, it's good for the U.S. farmers to have that market available. We've got to trade. It's in our Nation's interest to trade, and it's a sure way to help create jobs.

We've also got to have an energy policy if we're going to grow for the long term. One

of the great things about America is, is that we're self-sufficient in food. It's a national security interest to be self-sufficient in food. It's a luxury that you've always taken for granted here in this country, but imagine if we have to rely upon somebody else to provide us food. It would be a problem. The good news is, we can not only grow food for ourselves; we can grow food for others.

That's not the way it is in energy. We're too reliant upon foreign sources of energy. We're too reliant upon parts of the world that may like us, may not like us, for our sources of energy. It seems like, to me, that we ought to work hard to become more self-sufficient, less reliant, by having an energy plan that encourages conservation—encourages the use of ethanol, for example—value-added processing, and also explores for energy in our own hemisphere and in our own States, in an environmentally friendly way.

Finally an administration has come along and said, "Let's have a national energy plan." And that's exactly what passed out of the House, and hopefully, we can get it out of the Senate, just like the trade bill that came out of the House. Hopefully, we can get it out of the Senate. Hopefully, when they come back, they listen to the American people and put plans in place that will help our economy grow so that people can find work.

Finally, I want to talk to you about economic policy out of Washington. It seems like, to me, that the question we ought to be asking in Washington is, what does it take to help people create jobs? What's it take? I started with this part: I said that if you give people their own money back, if you let them keep more of their hard-earned dollars, that's good for the economy. If a consumer has got more money, he or she spends it on a product, causing the person who manufactures the product to keep jobs in place and/or increase jobs.

And so we worked together and passed meaningful, real tax relief. It came at exactly the right time. The economy started to show signs of slowing down in March of 2001. A way to stimulate growth during recession is to give people—let them keep their own money. That's Economics 101; except, it sounds like some of them hadn't taken the course in Washington. [*Laughter*]

There's now some talk that maybe we should raise taxes in a recession. That would be a disaster for the American economy, and we're not going to let it happen. And one of the best parts of that bill, that tax bill, was phasing out the death tax so the American farmer can pass his assets from one generation to the next.

And there are some things we ought to do in Washington to help. We ought to help people who lost their job on 9/11, whose industries were affected as the result of that attack. That means extending unemployment benefits. That means helping people with health care. But here's the way I think about it: People really don't want an unemployment check; they want a permanent paycheck. And therefore, we ought to figure out ways to expand the job base of America.

Every question ought to be, how do we grow our economy in a smart way? Therefore, I'm more than willing to work with the Democrats and Republicans to help the unemployed, but I ask them to think long term for America. Accelerating depreciation makes sense for people who buy equipment. It makes sense to speed up the tax relief. It makes sense to help low-income taxpayers with money in their pocket to enhance demand.

Oh, there's some smart things we can do to stimulate this economy, and there's some smart things we will do to make sure that we've got a good farm bill. I look forward to working with both political parties to come up with a farm bill that meets the following principles: One, it will be generous and affordable. There will be ample money in there to meet the needs, and it's money that will fit into our budget. Secondly, a farm bill must provide a safety net for the American farmer without encouraging overproduction and thereby depressing prices. Thirdly, the farm bill must support our strong commitment to trade. Fifthly, it must offer incentives for good conservation practices on working lands. And finally, establish farm savings accounts to help farmers manage risks.

These are sound principles which will enable the American farmer to plan, to think ahead, to be able to survive in a down time, and thrive when the markets get good. I look forward to working to get a good farm bill,

and I look forward to working with you to get a good farm bill.

Here are some practical steps to make sure that our economy recovers: good education—that will help in the long run, for certain—good tax policy; a good stimulus package; a good farm bill; good trade policy; and most importantly, homeland security that keeps Americans safe.

You know, when the enemy hit us, I was amazed to read that they really thought we were soft. They kind of didn't understand America very well. They might have been watching too much TV or something. [Laughter] I don't know what it was, but they thought, "Well, we'll hit them, and then America will fold their tent." We may launch a cruise missile or two, but that will be it. Man, did they make a big mistake.

They don't understand how much we love freedom and that we're willing to fight for it. They didn't understand people—they must not have understood people being on a commercial airline, figuring—realizing what was happening, then saying a prayer and bringing the plane down to save others' lives. They didn't understand sacrifice. But what they really don't understand is the character of the American people. They don't realize that this Nation is a nation full of people who are determined and strong but compassionate and loving.

A lot of times people ask me, "What can I do in the war against terror?" Well, obviously, if you see something unusual, report it. Treat people with respect. Value all religious—religions. But there are some other things you can do. Fight evil with good. We can fight terror using our military, and we're going to, of course. But we can fight terror and evil with acts of kindness, with millions of acts of kindness, all across the country. The best thing about America is the fact that that happens on a daily basis. There are people who walk across the street to a neighbor in need and say, "Can I help you? What can I do to help?" They find somebody who is shut in and say, "I'd like to just love you for a second." It happens when Sunday schools or synagogues or mosques empty out, and they look for somebody to help. It happens when people raise money for a local charity. It happens when somebody says, "I want to

be a Boy Scout leader, to teach a child good values." It happens when somebody mentors a child and teaches them how to read.

The war on terror is a war we will fight on many fronts. It is a war we're going to win on many fronts. It's a war we'll win at home because this is a compassionate nation, full of decent and loving and caring people. And it is such an honor to be the President of the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth.

Thank you for having me. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the warehouse at the MFA Feed Mill. In his remarks, he referred to Roseann Blunt, wife of Representative Roy Blunt of Missouri.

Remarks in New Orleans, Louisiana January 15, 2002

The President. Thank you all very much. It's great to be back in what they call the Big Easy. As you might remember, I grew up in Texas and spent some quality time here in New Orleans. I forgot how good the food is. I'm going to have to spend about a week working off that baked Alaska that I had at Antoine's. *[Laughter]*

I didn't have any pretzels last night for dinner. *[Laughter]* I learned my lesson: Always listen to your mother, who told me, "Chew your pretzels before you swallow." *[Laughter]*

But thank you all for coming. It is a beautiful day in a great city and an important part of our economy, and that is the Port of New Orleans. I want to thank Gary LaGrange, who is the executive director of this facility. I want to thank the Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, who is traveling with me. I want to thank the chairman of the Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners. I want to thank Dave Wagner. I want to thank Jim Campbell, who is the president of the International Longshoremen's Association Number 3000. I want to thank all the hardworking longshoremen who are here to help make America grow.

I want to thank my friend the Governor of the great State of Louisiana. What a piece of work that guy is. That's why they love you,

Mike. *[Laughter]* He knows how to tell the truth; he speaks plainly, and he's doing a heck of a good job for the people of Louisiana.

I want to thank Congressman David Vitter, who's here today. I want to thank Congressman John Cooksey, who is with us, as well. Thank you both for coming.

And I want to thank you all for coming out to say hello. It's a great way to end my trip throughout America's heartland. I started yesterday in Moline, Illinois, at a factory that makes harvesting equipment for John Deere. I told them I was coming down to New Orleans, and I said, "I'm going to come to the place where much of the equipment you manufacture is shipped out when you sell overseas."

And then I went to see some farmers in Missouri. And I told them that I was coming down to New Orleans in Louisiana, which ships out a lot of the product that they grow. The reason I'm here is because I want America to understand how our economy works. We're worried about jobs in our country. We want everybody who wants to find work to be able to have work; everybody who wants a job should be able to provide for their family. I'm worried about the loss of jobs.

Our economy is interconnected. What happens in Moline, Illinois, and in Missouri affects the people who work here in New Orleans, in the port. And therefore, good public policy recognizes that. And good public policy asks the questions, how do we make sure that what affects one affects the other in a positive way? How do we make sure people can find jobs as we head into the year 2000?

The best way to make sure that our economy recovers from the attack—I think one of the most important things I can do is to make sure that they don't hit us again. We suffered a lot on September the 11th, and one of the things that we suffered was the lack of confidence in the future. But as every day goes by, the American people are getting more and more confident in our ability to protect ourselves and the ability for our Government to respond in a positive way to make sure that families are safe in America.

I fully understand the enemy still lurks out there, and the enemy still would like to hit